Recent actions taken by the U.S. Special Operations Command are starting to address some long-standing problems with the management of the SOF foreign language program and the delivery of language training. In September 2002, the command consolidated all training under a single contractor to provide a universal, standardized curriculum and a range of delivery mechanisms for Army, Navy, and Air Force SOF components. Initial assessments suggest that the contractor's offerings are meeting contract expectations. In other actions, the program is completing an overdue assessment of SOF language requirements, developing a database of language proficiencies and training, and finding ways to take advantage of other national language-training assets. While promising, these ongoing actions are taking place without the benefit of a cohesive management framework incorporating a strategy and strategic planning to guide, integrate, and monitor its activities. Without such a framework, the program risks losing its current momentum and failing to meet new language-training needs that SOF personnel are likely to acquire as they take on expanded roles in combating terrorism and other military operations.

The SOF foreign language program continues to face challenges, such as more frequent and longer deployments, that limit personnel's access to language training. Army Reserve and National Guard SOF members face additional difficulties in gaining access to centrally located training because of geographical dispersion and part-time status; they also have lower monetary incentives to acquire language proficiencies and fewer training opportunities. As a result, most SOF personnel have been unable to take needed training or required tests to qualify in their respective language(s). To address these challenges, program officials are looking into distance/distributive-learning approaches, which offer “anytime, anywhere” training that would be highly adaptable to SOF personnel needs, but they are still at an early stage in their evaluations.